DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 486 UD 027 157

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TITLE Correlates of Successful Dropout Prevention Strategies for At-Risk Children in Urban Schools.
PUB DATE 27 Mar 89
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, March 27, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Attendance; *College School Cooperation; *Dropout Prevention; Dropout Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; Longitudinal Studies; Mathematics Achievement; *Minority Group Children; Multiple Regression Analysis; Public Schools; Reading Achievement; School Holding Power; Self Esteem; Social Services; Tutoring; *Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS Childhood Level of Living Scale (Polansky Pollane); Fordham University NY; New York City Board of Education; *Partnerships in Education; Practice Profiles

ABSTRACT

This report examines the correlates of successful social and educational strategies of a dropout prevention program for minority children in an urban school district. In 1986, Fordham University's Graduate School of Education and Social Services became partners with a heavily-populated minority public school district in New York City. This paper describes the first two years of Fordham's Stay-in-School Partnership Project (SSPP) and attempts to answer the following questions: (1) how much impact did SSPP have on the attendance rate of at-risk children? (2) what effects did it exercise on their academic achievement? and (3) what types of practices and strategies were most effective in this setting? Data on attendance rates, reading and math performance, self-esteem, adequacy of child care, and an emerging "practice profile" of the project are used to answer these questions. SSPP works by addressing the school experience of children at risk through structured tutoring and play therapy, and by confronting outside experiences through family problem-solving and counseling as well as parental workshops. The project responds to the urban school crisis by focusing on preventive strategies supported by data, identifying areas of greatest and weakest impact, and communicating effective practices. (AF)

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# CORRELATES OF SUCCESSFUL, DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN IN URBAN SCHOOLS

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Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco, CA, March 27, 1989.

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# CORRELATES OF SUCCESSFUL, DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES

# FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN IN URBAN SCHOOLS

## INTRODUCTION

Researchers have devoted considerable effort in recent years to understanding the causes of dropping out. The recent availability of national data (such as the High School and Beyond Study) has aided this effort in providing in-depth information on dropouts and continuing students. Likewise, it is supported by the growing use of alternative research strategies ranging from multivariate statistical modeling to ethnographic studies that can increase our understanding of this complex problem (e.g., Wehlage & Rutter, 1986).

Recently Rumberger et al. (1988), concluding that families exercise a strong influence on the educational well-being of students, recommended that schools work more closely with students' families. This strategy is currently being used in schools to bolster student well-being and achievement (Comer, 1986). In a similar vein, Natriello, Pallas, McDill, McPartland, and Royster (1988) have pointed out that "most scientific research in the area (i.e., dropout prevention) has focused on the student precursors of dropping out rather than on the programs that may reduce these risks" (p.1). Their typology of approaches to dropout prevention is meant to overcome this lack of information in dropout prevention programs. Our paper will add to this body of information by identifying the correlates of successful social and educational strategies of a dropout prevention program for minority children in an urban school district.

In 1986, Fordham University's Graduate Schools of Education and Social Services became partners with a heavily-populated minority public school district in New York City. The long-term goal of this relationship is to allocate university resources to help public school staff in their efforts to prevent children from dropping out of school. Funded by the Bureau of Grants Administration of the New York State Department of Education, Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnership Project (SSPP) has completed its second year of a longitudinal evaluation in June 1988. Presently, this project is in the middle of its third year. Our paper describes the first two years of the project.

## OBJECTIVES

We seek to answer three important questions in this paper: (1) How much impact did SSPP have on the attendance rate of at-risk children?; (2) What effects did it exercise on their academic achievement?; and (3) What types of practices and strategies were most effective in this setting? Our answers to these questions will rely on data collected over two years on attendance rates, reading and math performance, self-esteem, adequacy of child care, and an emerging "practice profile" of the project.

## PERSPECTIVE

This quote from <u>An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools</u> (1988) captures our perspective: "Here then is our conclusion: America must confront, with urgency, the crisis in our urban schools. Bold, aggressive action is needed now to avoid leaving a huge and growing segment of the nation's youth civically unprepared and economically

unempowered. This nation must see the urban school crisis for what it is: a major failure of social policy, a piecemeal approach to a problem that requires a unified response " (p.xiv-xv).

The "unified response" of the SSPP project combines three distinct approaches: (1) focusing on preventive strategies supported by data (e.g., careful monitoring of project processes by social service and educational staff); (2) using effect size (ES) data as the metric to identify areas of greatest and weakest impact (i.e., difference-score ES without controls); and (3) identifying effective practices by formulating a practice profile that can be communicated with other researchers and practitioners with similar interests. Together these approaches are meant to help classroom teachers and school-based administrators, higher education staff (including social service and educational personnel), and state education officials to better understand the context of the urban crisis and to bring about "bold, aggressive action."

METHODS

Our longitudinal evaluation design combines descriptive and analytical elements. The original proposal for SSPP called for an experimental/ control group design. However, due to the unfeasibility and lack of resources to apply this design in the schools, it was abandoned for a "quality control" design, enabling project personnel to focus on those processes deemed important in responding to the needs of at-risk children. This entailed continual collection of relevant data on student characteristics,services, and results: The interrelationships between specifying project goals, acting to accomplish them, and assessing their overall impact were fundamental to the dropout prevention effort. Our definition of at-risk children includes those children who had more than 15 absences in any academic year, failed to make adequate progress in school, achieved below their expected age-grade level, and who were likely to be retained in grade and/or referred to special educational services. These eligibility criteria were part of the state's definition of at-risk youth.

Three elementary schools in a large public school district of East Harlem have been partners in SSPP since September 1986. Sixty children spanning grades 1-4 and their parents are participating: 24 percent are Black and 66 percent are Hispanic (adding the element of limited-English proficiency ). These children, in meeting the state's eligibility criteria, were selected by classroom teachers and building principal, in cooperation with social service and educational personnel from Fordham. These children and their families receive a comprehensive set of coordinated services from social service staff (play therapy, counseling, advocacy, consultation, family problem solving) and educational personnel (one-to-one tutoring, individualized instruction, parental workshops). In addition, classroom teachers and building administrators receive inservice training on issues and practices related to at-risk prevention.

To appreciate the efforts at coordination between the Graduate Schools of Fordham University (Education and Social Services respectively) and the New York City Public School District, the figure below identifies the "flow" of information and communication that transpired between and within these organizational units from 1986-88.

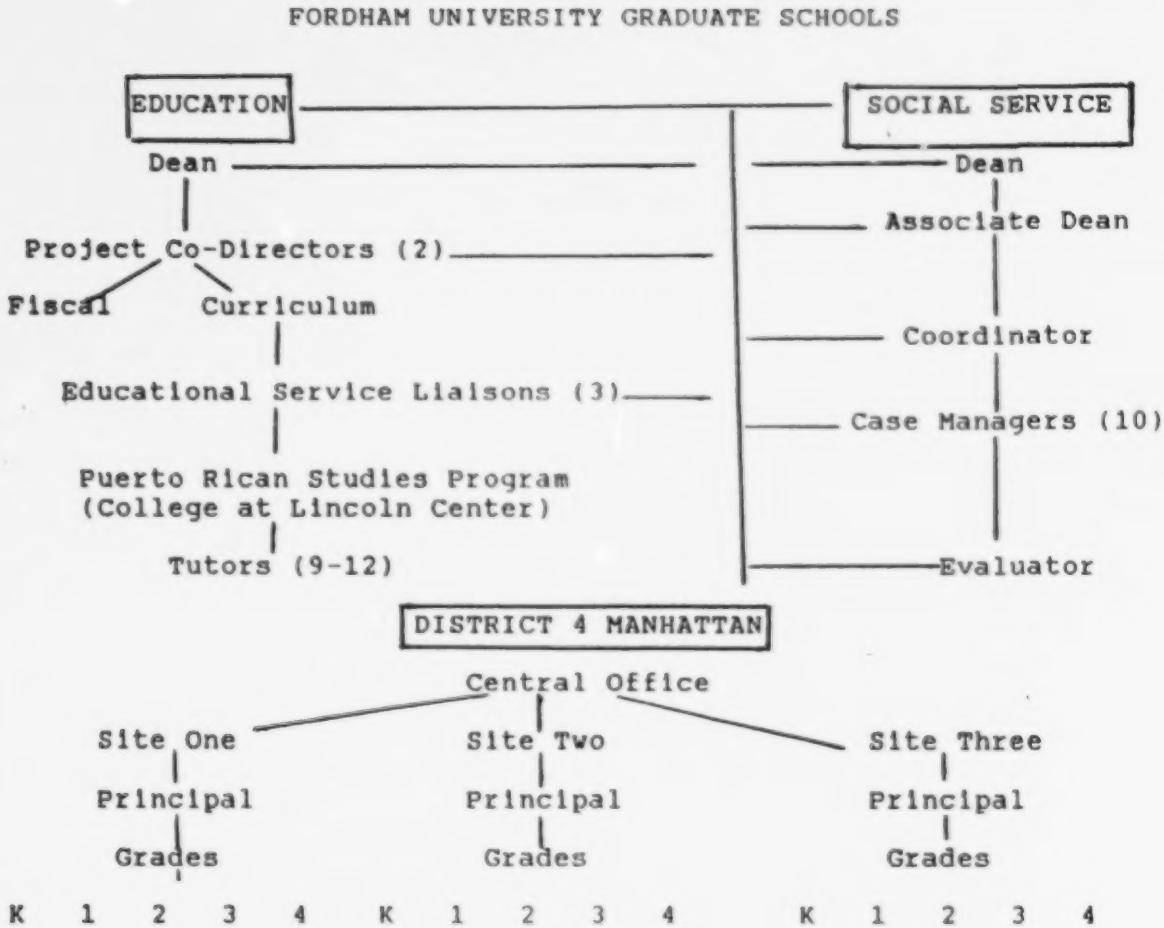


**Figure 1.** Organizational Chart of Stay-In-School Partnership Project: Fordham University & District 4 Manhattan 1986-1988.

This chart identifies the key units within Fordham University and the district that were responsible for realizing the objectives of SSPP. Communication within Fordham and with district personnel were maintained by project coordinators and field personnel.

A pre/post test design using difference-score effect size data (ES) as the metric (Feltz et al., 1988) is used to ascertain the practical effects of the project in these areas: absenteeism, educational achievement in reading and math, adequacy of child care, and self esteem. Project staff have diligently collected these data at three intervals (December 1986; May 1987; and May 1988), thereby providing a substantial database for comparative purposes. Other statistical data gauging the preventive strategies employed by social service and educational personnel within and across the three sites, and the impact of parental and staff training workshops are another essential part of the project.

DATA SOURCES

A combination of data sources were identified to monitor SSPP'simpact. Fordham'sSSPP went beyond the minimal requirements of absenteeism, educational achievement, and special education referrals identified by the funding agency for similar project evaluations. Reliability of standardized instruments are indicated in parentheses. Figure 2 lists all data sources.

| Variable | Instrumentality | Date Collected |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance of Target Population | Attendance Lists | Yearly & monthly |
| Educational achievement | Kaufman K-TEA, Brief Form (reading & math) (.76-.84) | Spring to Spring Intervals |
| Adequacy of Child Care | Childhood Level of Living Scale (.64-.88) | Fall & Spring |
| Self Esteem | Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (.87-.92) | Spring to Spring Intervals |
| Social Service Activities | Levels of Social Service Form | Daily & monthly |
| Tutoring | Logs & Educational Service Plan | Weekly |
| Special Education Referrals | List of referrals | Spring |
| Parental & Staff Training | Workshop Evaluation Questionnaires | After each workshop |
| Practice Profile of Project | Questionnaires & Interviews | During 2nd year of project. |

Figure 2. Data Sources for Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1986-88.

RESULTS

The major results of SSPP at the end of two years were as follows:

Absenteeism

Within two years, absenteeism decreased significantly (from a mean of 38 days to 28; ES was +.44 across all sites); monitoring of monthly attendance revealed February and April to be "out of control" months for project children.

For the 1986-87 school year, a high rate of absenteeism among allthree sites was evident. All sites averaged 38 absences for 1986-1987, For 1987-88--the second year of the project--, a definite reduction in absences occurred. The mean number of days absent was 28, and the variability dropped from 25 to 19, indicating that project staff activities began to reverse a negative process into a positive one.

Table 1 reports comparisons with the previous year (1986-87) and the results of different analytical techniques.

Table 1.

Comparative Results of Absences for SSPP Sites, 1986-88

| SITE | 1986-87 [a] | 1987-88 | STATISTICAL OUTCOME [c] | EFFECT SIZE [d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PS 96 | 35.93 (15) [b] | 37.26 (15) | Not sig.(NS) | -.06 |
| PS 101 | 38.77 (22) | 23.68 (22) | Sig.(p=.006) | +.68 |
| PS 121 | 39.52 (17) | 26.23 (17) | Sig.(p=.037) | +.56 |
| TOTAL | 38.22 (54) | 28.25 (54) | Sig.(p=.006) | +.44 |

[a] Mean scores [b] Number of participants in parentheses

[c] Results of t-Related Samples test

[d] Effect size provides additional substance and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pooled standard deviations of both years.

These data are very encouraging: Statistical significance was reached within two years of the project in all sites except one. ES demonstrates how much absenteeism was reduced at each site: A moderate effect size occurred across all sites while higher impact was noted for two sites. The monitoring processes and levels of social service were mainly responsible for these positive outcomes.

Each case manager under the direction of the field coordinator completed a levels of social service form for each client. This form records the type and nature of contact for each child and family in the project, e.g., individual/group contact, family, school personnel, outside agencies, workshops, telephone. Table 2 summarizes the total number of contacts for each site between September and May of year two of the project. Frequency data are reported for each category.

Table 2.

Distribution of Levels of Social Service Categories for SSPP Sites, September 1987--May 1988.

| LEVEL OF SOCIAL SERVICE | PS 96 | PS 101 | PS 121 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual/Group | 320 | 422 | 335 |
| Family | 177 | 177 | 151 |
| School Personnel | 185 | 311 | 193 |
| Agencies | 86 | 175 | 57 |
| Telephone | 448 | 443 | 251 |

These distributions capture the types and extent to which social service staff made contacts for parents and their children during the second year of the project. (It should be pointed out that telephones were not available at one site except for one telephone in the teacher's room; space in which to conduct individual/group meetings was also inadequate). Results of the application of chi-square contingency analyses yielded significant differences among all categories across the sites, most likely due to the contrast in satisfactory working conditions at two sites, and poor conditions at the third site.

Educational Achievement

No significant effects in reading and math have been noted as a result of structured tutoring. This is most likely due to the limited opportunity for tutoring for each child--45 minutes per week--and the difficulty experienced by staff in obtaining tutors for each site on a consistent basis.

Table 3 summarizes SSPP reading performance for 1986-87 and 1987-88, respectively. A spring-to-spring pre/post design is used for comparing both years. The reader is cautioned in making any definite

conclusions from these data for various reasons. Due to inadequate prior reading test data in the cumulative record folders of the target population along with the different tests required by the New York City Board of Education, and to reduce the amount of standardized testing, these data were collected at three points in time. The first testing was completed by the end of December 1985 to establish prior achievement scores for the first year of the project; the second testing occurred in May 1986 for the posttest. These latter scores were then used as the pretest scores in the present analysis. The third point in time was the testing in May 1988. The reader is also reminded that project pupils received tutoring for 45 minutes each week. Statistical significance and ES for the second year of the project are summarized in the following table. NCEs are reported.

Table 3.

[a]
Mean NCE Reading Performance for SSPP Participants, 1986-87.

| SITE | MEAN NCEs | | S.D. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| PS 96 (12,11)[b] | 39.75 | 40.90 | 15.16 | 19.56 |
| PS 101 (21,24) | 32.19 | 32.29 | 21.02 | 18.06 |
| PS 121 (11,16) | 28.54 | 24.56 | 15.28 | 19.35 |
| TOTAL (44,51) | 33.34 | 31.72 | 17.90 | 19.34 |

[a] Appropriate age/grade levels of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA) were used.

[b] Number of participants in parentheses (pre,post)

These descriptive data indicate wide variations among pre- and posttest NCE scores within and between all SSPP sites. Little reduction in variability is evident in posttest NCE scores.

The following table reports comparisons relevant to the evaluation of reading performance. Analytical results are reported.

Table 4.

Analytical Results of Pre/Post Reading Performance[a] for SSPP Sites, 1986-1988.

| SITE | NCE DIFFERENCE | STATISTICAL OUTCOME[b] | EFFECT SIZE[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| PS 96 (7)[d] | +1.85 | Not Significant(NS) | +.13 |
| PS 101 (21) | -2.33 | NS | -.11 |
| PS 121 (9) | -2.44 | NS | -.14 |
| TOTAL (37) | -1.56 | NS | -.08 |

[a] Mean NCE scores of Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement are reported.

[b] Results of t-Related Samples test.

[c] Effect size provides additional substance, and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pretest standard deviations.

[d] Number of participants in parenthesis.

Although the tutoring component of project SSPP is designed to supplement the regular education program in each school, these data can be useful in monitoring the specific academic areas of reading and math in which project pupils need more help. Notwithstanding the lack of statistical significance within and between sites in reading, the results of the calculation of effect sizes are somewhat encouraging in the case of one site (interestingly, last year's final report indicated a negative ES of -.01 for PS 96).

Given that math performance was never a formally-stated objective in the original proposal, diagnostic information from testing and teacher recommendations made math tutoring another compensatory activity of the project. Similar data collection procedures were used as for reading. Again the reader is cautioned in making any definite conclusions from these data for various reasons similar to those described for reading. Statistical significance and effect sizes for the second year of the project are summarized in the following table.

NCEs are reported. Table 5 summarizes SSPP math performance for 1986-88.

Table 5.

Mean NCE Math Performance for SSPP Participants, 1986-88.

| SITE | MEAN NCEs | | S.D. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| PS 96 (12,11)[b] | 30.33 | 31.00 | 18.74 | 26.42 |
| PS 101 (22,24) | 35.09 | 39.04 | 22.98 | 18.81 |
| PS 121 (11,16) | 35.00 | 45.06 | 21.21 | 28.90 |
| TOTAL (45,51) | 33.80 | 39.19 | 20.56 | 24.06 |

[a] Appropriate age/grade levels of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA) were used.

[b] Number of participants in parentheses (pre,post)

These descriptive data indicate gains in math performance across and within each site. Large variations among pre- and posttest NCE scores are evident.

The following table reports comparisons relevant to the evaluation of math performance. Analytical results are reported.

Table 6.

Analytical Results of Pre/Post Math Performance[a] for SSPP Sites, 1986-1988.

| SITE | NCE DIFFERENCE | STATISTICAL OUTCOME[b] | EFFECT SIZE[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| PS 96 (7)[d] | +1.28 | Not Significant(NS) | +.06 |
| PS 101 (22) | +4.59 | NS | +.19 |
| PS 121 (9) | +11.33 | Significant (p=.06) | +.48 |
| TOTAL (38) | +5.57 | Significant (p=.08) | +.25 |

[a] Mean NCE scores of Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement are reported.

[b] Results of t-Related Samples test.

[c] Effect size provides additional substance, and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pretest standard deviations.

[d] Number of participants in parenthesis.

In comparison with first year findings in which statistical significance was not reached within any of the sites, these data are encouraging. ES results indicate a definite turnaround from the previous year: The overall ES was small (+.25) while the ES of last year was (.09), a positive trend. School-based teachers and project staff influenced math achievement for these children.

Adequacy of Child Care Conditions

Adequacy of child care conditions, as perceived by social service interns, continued to fall into the "neglectful" category of the Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLs).

Table 7 summarizes the results of the CLLs, a measure that yields information on the adequacy of child care. According to Polansky et al. (1978), this instrument contains two major parts: Part A--Physical Care dealing with basic issues of food, clothing, shelter, safety, health care; and Part B--Emotional/Cognitive Care has to do with providing growth experiences and emotional support. Case managers, under the supervision of the social service coordinator, completed this rating scale for each target child in May, 1988. The pretest scores were the May 1987 CLL scores. (It should be pointed out that two different groups of case manager interns completed the CLL scale in each year of the project).

Table 7.

Results of Childhood Level of Living Scale[a] for SSPP Participants, 1987-88.

| | MEAN | | MEDIAN | | S.D. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SITE | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| PS 96 (16,16)[b] | 55.7 | 42.7 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 8.4 | 16.4 |
| PS 101 (23,24) | 57.6 | 51.2 | 59 | 58 | 9.6 | 21.6 |
| PS 121 (19,19) | 57.3 | 45.2 | 58 | 51 | 12.0 | 17.5 |
| TOTAL (58,59) | 57.0 | 47.0 | 58 | 54 | 10.0 | 19.1 |

[a] The Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLS) was devised to assess the level of neglect or deprivation that exists in the home environment. Neglect is defined as "a condition in which a caretaker responsible for a child either deliberately or by extraordinary inattentiveness permits the child to experience avoidable present suffering and fails to provide one or more of the ingredients generally deemed essential for developing a person's physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities" (Polansky et al., 1978). Scores can be interpreted according to the following categories:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Seriously Neglectful | 0 - 47 | (20th percentile) |
| Neglectful | 48 - 62 | (40th percentile) |
| Marginal Child Care | 63 - 76 | (50th percentile) |
| Acceptable Child Care | 77 - 87 | (80th percentile) |
| Good Child Care | 80 - 99 | (100th percentile) |

[b] Number of participants in parentheses (pre,post)

These descriptive data yielded from the CLL indicate that the casemanagers perceived the home condition of at-risk children in general as falling within the category of "neglectful." Pre/post scores within all SSPP sites confirm this conclusion.

The following table reports comparisons relevant to the evaluation of Childhood Level of Living Scale data. Analytical results are reported.

Table 8.

Analytical Results of Pre/Post Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLS) for SSPP Sites, 1987-1988.

| SITE | SCALE DIFFERENCE[a] | STATISTICAL OUTCOME[b] | EFFECT SIZE[c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| PS 96 (16)[d] | -13 | Significant (p=.009) | -1.04 |
| PS 101 (23) | -6 | Not Significant (NS) | -.42 |
| PS 121 (19) | -12 | Significant (p=.01) | -.81 |
| TOTAL (58) | -10 | Sig. beyond .01 | -.69 |

[a] Mean CLLS scores are reported.

[b] Results of t-Related Samples test.

[c] Effect size provides additional substance, and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pooled standard deviations.

[d] Number of students in parentheses.

One definite conclusion of these data is clear: This group of case managers in contrast with the 1986-87 group rated the level of childhood care as "neglectful," with the magnitude ranging from "moderate to large." (If the 1987-88 group had completed pretest CLLS scores in the fall, one can only speculate if their ratings would have been significantly different from the first year group; it should be pointed out, however, that the correlation between CLLS '87 and CLLS '88 scores was .20 which resulted in a p=.12.) This finding, then, of "neglectful" home care continued to be a consistent trend across all sites and must be considered in reaching any conclusions about the impact of this project on at-risk pupils.

Self Esteem

Significant correlations occurred between student self esteem and educational achievement (.29 and .30 for reading and math respectively).

Self esteem data were collected during the 1987-88 school year. It was reasoned that student perceptions of how they felt about themselves in social, family, and personal areas of experience could be useful in coordinating the efforts of the social service and educational components, respectively. Tutoring and play therapy being the two basic modes of direct student service in each component, increased awareness of each student's level of self esteem might be helpful in improving each component. Within this context, the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (SEI) (School Form) was administered to determine the evaluation a person makes about him- or herself, i.e., "overall self-esteem is an expression of approval or disapproval, indicating the extent to which a person believes him- or herself competent, successful, significant, and worthy" (Coopersmith, 1986, pp.1-2). Sample items from this checklist included: "Things usually don't bother me;" "I get upset easily at home;" "I'm pop-ular with kids my own age;" "I often get discouraged at school." (Case managers adapted the SEI for children in grades 1 and 2). Table 9 summarizes the raw score results of the SEI administration for each site.

Table 9.

Measures of Central Tendency of Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory for SSPP Participants, 1987-88.

| SITE | MEAN SCORE | MEDIAN | S.D. | RANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PS 96 (13)[a] | 53.8 | 52 | 11.5 | 32-72 |
| PS 101 (18) | 44.4 | 50 | 21.6 | 0-64 |
| PS 121 (17) | 48.2 | 56 | 23.8 | 0-80 |
| TOTAL (48) | 48.5 | 52 | 20.2 | 0-80 |

[a] Number of pupils in parentheses.

These self esteem data show variability across all sites. If scores on the SEI between 26-74 (interquartile range) are viewed as indicative of "medium self esteem," then, in general, the majority of score types fall within this category (the lower quartile being indicative of "low self esteem" and the uppper quartile designated as "high self esteem"). Frequency data of all SEI results showed that 95 percent of project students fell in the interquartile range. These findings can be used as a base on which to improve the social service and tutoring components of the project in the future.

Special Education Referrals

In addition to these findings on absenteeism, reading and math performance, Childhood Level of Living Scale, and self esteem, the results for special education referrals are very positive. Only one student, out of a total of 62 who participated in the second year of the project, was formally referred to special education placement. Another six were in the process of pre-referral evaluation. This is another important result of the impact of the project.

Practice Profile of SSPP

A practice profile consisting of six components (assessment, record-keeping, play therapy, tutoring, coordination, family problem-solving) was identified by social service and educational staff of SSPP at the end of the second year.

This practice profile attempts to specify Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnerhsip Project by using an adaptation of the practice profile method of Loucks and Crandall (1982). Briefly the practice profile is an all-purpose tool that can "provide a standardized, systematic, cost-effective way to summarize program components and requirements" (p.1). One aim of this tool is to facilitate communication among users, evaluators, and potential adopters of innovative practices. Since many of the current state-funded projects claim to be innovative in responding to at-risk populations and include various descriptions about goals, philosophy, and approaches, it was only reasonable to apply the practice profile concept to Fordham's project. In addition to observations, this entailed critical analysis of documents (proposals, manuals, forms, etc.) and interviews with project personnel who were responsible for implementing educational and social service goals of the project. Examination of these data yielded from observations of actual practices, content analysis of documents, and responses to open-ended questionnaires resulted in the following practice profile (Figure 3) of SSPP. ("Component" is defined as the major operational features or parts of the profile.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Component 1: Assessment<br><br>(1)<br>Participants are assessed individually with combination of tests, teacher judgment, inventories, & interviews. | (2)<br>Participants are assessed individually using teacher judgment only. | (3)<br>Participants are not assessed individually. |
| Component 2: Record-Keeping<br><br>(1)<br>Individual record forms are kept up-to-date for counseling & tutoring. | (2)<br>Individual record forms are not kept up-to-date for counseling & tutoring. | (3)<br>No individual records are kept at all. |
| Component 3: Play-Therapy<br><br>(1)<br>Participants receive play therapy for 45 minutes once per week. Each session is equally divided between participants. | (2)<br>Participants receive play therapy for 45 minutes once per week. Time for each participant and each activity varies slightly when necessary. | (3)<br>Participants do not receive play therapy for 45 minutes per week, or time for each child and each activity varies markedly or is not considered. |
| Component 4: Tutoring<br><br>(1)<br>Students receive one-to-tutoring for 45 minutes each week. Activities are based on performance contract cooperatively decided on by classroom teacher & educational service liason (ESL). | (2)<br>Students receive one-to-tutoring for 45 minutes each week. Activities are not based on performance contract. | (3)<br>Students do not receive one-to-one tutoring for 45 minutes per week. |

CODE: _____Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.

--------Variations to the left are ideal, as determined by developers.

Figure 2. Practice Profile of Fordham--District 4 Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1987-1988.

| Component 5: Coordination | |
|---|---|
| (1)<br>Articulation & consultation are maintained among SSPP team and school staff (principal, classroom teachers) at frequent intervals. | (2)<br>Articulation & consultation are not maintained among SSPP team and school staff (principal, classroom teachers) at frequent intervals. |

| Component 6: Family Problem-Solving | |
|---|---|
| (1)<br>Families with at-risk children are taught strategies & skills to solve problems through counseling and other supportive means. | (2)<br>Families with at-risk children are not taught strategies & skills to solve problems through counseling and other supportive means. |

CODE: _____Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.

--------Variations to the left are ideal, as determined by developers.

Figure 2. Practice Profile of Fordham--District 4 Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1987-1988. (con't)

Parental Involvement

In the opinion of SSPP staff, probably the most significant change in the project during the second year was parental involvement.

Through the combined efforts of social service and educational staff,a majority of parents became more aware of and involved in ways to solve their social and school-related concerns. This was partly due to the 11 formal workshops that were conducted by Fordham professors on parental concerns (e.g., relating to school, child behaviors, etc.) and the accom-panying increase in parental attendance.

In addition, weekly levels of service as recorded by social service interns indicated a variety of contacts in such areas as: (1) individual/ group; (2) family; (3) school personnel; (4) agencies; and (5) telephone use. This levels of social service function averaged 248 contacts across the three sites in the second year of the project, summarizing the thrust of SSPP staff. (See table 2 for distributions). Seventy-five percent of the parents made use of services related to housing, social security, public assistance, day care, legal issues, after school care, substance abuse, medical and psychological, and speech, hearing and visual disorders.

Two training manuals--one to orient tutors in structuring tutoring activities and another to orient parents in various topics on child care--were developed in the first two years of the project.

Results of Multiple Regression Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were applied to the data for each year of the project. With absenteeism as the dependent variable and reading, childhood level of living scale, math and self esteem as the independent variables, for 1986-87 and 1987-88, the squared multiple correlations were .16 and .12, respectively. Although the proportion of variance accounted for in this combination of variables was small, the reading coefficients were significant for both years (.32 and .31). These results confirm the importance of reducing absenteeism to increase reading achievement.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SSPP

In this paper we described the results of Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnership Project with a New York City public school district in the hope that they can contribute to a better understanding of the complex issues confronting at-risk children and school personnel. Data about absenteeism, educational achievement, child care conditions, self esteem, levels of social service, and parental involvement were presented. In particular, the preventive strategies and effective practices of SSPP identified in this paper can benefit others who are taking similar "aggressive action" to bring about positive change in urban schools for these children and their families.

Our practice profile has similarities to the four-category typology of Natriello at al. (1988). Briefly, their typology includes two dimensions that describe a student's school experience (i.e., success in school and positive relationships in school), and another

two categories pertain to outside conditions (i.e., relevance of school and outside interferences). To a certain extent, SSPP focuses on all four areas of the typology: School experience of children at-risk is addressed through structured tutoring and play therapy, and outside experiences are confronted through family problem-solving and counseling as well as parental workshops.

The Stay-In-School-Partnership Project, initiated by the New York State Department of Education in 1986 to involve university resources, is one program that seeks to reduce children's risk of failure by following this principle: "there must be a joint effort by the schools and other social institutions to ameliorate the lives of these children" (Commissioner's Task Force,p.3). Fordham's partnership project contributed to this state-wide effort, and continues to do so for 1989-90, the third year of the project.

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